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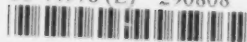
Eliminating rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations, including in conflict and related situations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/134, the present report provides information on the measures taken by States and other stakeholders to eliminate rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations. The report concludes with recommendations for future action.

* A/63/150.



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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report at its sixty-third session on the implementation of resolution 62/134, on measures taken by States and other stakeholders to eliminate rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations, including when they target victims associated with communities, ethnic groups or other groups regarded as antagonistic to or insufficiently supportive of the group or entity whose forces commit the crime, and are calculated to humiliate, instil fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate members of such groups, including, but not limited to, the victims and their families.

2. With a view to the preparation of the present report, a note verbale was sent to all Member States requesting information, and input was also sought from entities of the United Nations system. In all, 29 States¹ responded to the note verbale by the Secretary-General and 16 entities of the United Nations system provided input.² The work of intergovernmental and expert bodies of the United Nations was also reviewed.

II. Background

3. The perpetration of the crime of rape and other forms of sexual violence has been a concern of the global community for some time. A number of international and regional legal and policy instruments that are focused on the promotion of gender equality and the prevention and elimination of violence against women explicitly list rape and other forms of sexual violence among those requiring action. Rape and other forms of sexual violence in conflict and related situations have also been the subject of specific attention.

4. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, outlined, in its general recommendation No. 19 (1992), on violence against women, steps to be taken by States parties to prevent and address rape, including marital rape, and other forms of sexual violence. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (resolution 48/104) identifies three settings in which physical, sexual and psychological violence against

¹ Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Jamaica, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Paraguay, Qatar, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The present report is therefore based on that limited number of responses.

² The Department of Public Information, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Health Organization. UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict and the International Organization for Migration also submitted information.

women occurs, referring to violence in the family, with specific mention of marital rape; violence within the general community, with specific mention of rape and sexual abuse; and violence perpetrated or condoned by the State. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará) require States parties to take measures to prevent and punish rape and other forms of sexual violence. Rape and sexual violence are also covered in Council of Europe recommendation 2002(5), on violence against women.

5. United Nations conferences on women have, since 1975, progressively emphasized the need to eliminate violence against women, including sexual abuse and rape. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, identified violence against women and women and armed conflict as 2 of 12 critical areas of concern requiring urgent action.

6. Several intergovernmental bodies, including the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the former Commission on Human Rights, have given guidance on actions to be taken, at various levels and by various stakeholders, to prevent and eliminate specific forms of violence, including rape and sexual violence. The Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of the Commission on Human Rights dealt for a number of years with the issue of rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during armed conflicts.

7. The Geneva Conventions and the Protocols additional thereto set out specific protections and guarantees for women against rape and other forms of sexual violence.³ Violations of the human rights of women during armed conflict, including systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy,⁴ and the use of such treatment of women as a deliberate instrument of war,⁵ have been condemned at United Nations conferences since the early 1990s, when the General Assembly dealt with the issue of rape and abuse of women in several conflict situations,⁶ denouncing the use of rape as a weapon of war.

8. The International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda have recognized sexual violence, including rape, as acts of torture, crimes against humanity and an element of genocide in some circumstances⁷ and have contributed to the broadening of the definition of rape under international criminal law. Those gains were subsequently reflected in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which establishes jurisdiction to

³ United Nations (2002), *Women, Peace and Security: study submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)*, Sales No. E.03.IV.1, paras. 118-120.

⁴ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III, paras. 1.28 and II.38 (Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action).

⁵ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex, para. 4.10.

⁶ Resolutions 48/88, 48/143, 49/205, 50/192 and 51/115.

⁷ See *The Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu*, Case No. ICTR-96-4-T, 2 September 1998, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and *The Prosecutor v. Dragoljub Kunarac, Radomir Kovac, and Zoran Vukovic*, Case No. IT-96-23 & 23/1, 12 June 2002, International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

try crimes of sexual violence, such as rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization or other sexual violence as war crimes under the category of other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict, within the established framework of international law,⁸ and as crimes against humanity when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed at a civilian population.⁹

9. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security constitutes a milestone in addressing violence against women, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, in situations of armed conflict. That resolution has now been complemented by Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) on women and peace and security, in which the Council affirmed that effective steps to prevent and respond to sexual violence can significantly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, and demanded that all parties to armed conflict immediately take appropriate measures to protect civilians, including women and girls, from all forms of sexual violence. The Security Council affirmed its intention to take into consideration the appropriateness of targeted and graduated measures against parties to situations of armed conflict who commit rape and other forms of sexual violence when establishing and renewing State-specific sanctions regimes. It requested the Secretary-General to continue and strengthen efforts to implement the policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and urged troop- and police-contributing countries to take appropriate preventive action. It also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report by 30 June 2009 on the implementation of the resolution in the context of situations on the agenda of the Council.

10. The Security Council has also given guidance to United Nations missions to strengthen the response to rape and sexual violence, as well as the implementation of the policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse, and addressed the issue of sexual and other forms of violence committed against civilians, including children.¹⁰

11. Human rights treaty bodies have in many instances expressed concern about rape and other forms of sexual violence,¹¹ including when perpetrated in conflict and related situations. Several special rapporteurs and special representatives with thematic mandates of the Commission on Human Rights and, subsequently, the Human Rights Council, in particular the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences,¹² have addressed the issue of rape and other forms of sexual violence and made recommendations for preventing and responding to such crimes.

12. Recently,¹³ several independent experts and special rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council with country mandates reporting on cases referred to the continuing prevalence of rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated by various actors, including Government personnel, police agents, members of the military, armed bandits, members of youth gangs and other, unidentified, armed men wearing

⁸ Article 8(2)(b)(xxii).

⁹ Article 7(1)(g).

¹⁰ Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1674 (2006).

¹¹ A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1, paras. 276-279.

¹² See, for example, A/HRC/7/6/Add.4.

¹³ Reports issued from 2006 to 2008 were reviewed.

civilian clothes or military uniforms. The high incidence of sexual violence against internally displaced persons was also reported.¹⁴ While experts have also reported on actions undertaken by States to address such violence, including legal and policy efforts, they have also noted that, in many instances, the implementation of those initiatives remained weak.

III. Measures taken by States to implement resolution 62/134

13. As at 6 June 2008, 29 States had responded to the Secretary-General's request for information on the implementation of resolution 62/134, covering steps taken, including in cooperation with other stakeholders, to protect women and girls from such violence, end impunity and ensure access to justice for victims, provide services and support for victims, put in place strategies for prevention, prosecution and monitoring and make available increased resources for work to end violence against women.

14. From the responses received, it is apparent that measures to eliminate rape and other forms of sexual violence form part of the holistic approach taken by States to addressing violence against women. These general efforts are the subject of the Secretary-General's report on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (A/63/214). The issue of trafficking in women and girls is covered in the report of the Secretary-General on that topic (A/63/215).

A. Human rights instruments, constitutional frameworks and follow-up to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

15. Violence against women is a form of gender-based discrimination and a violation of women's human rights. Addressing discrimination against women is a central element of efforts to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women, and failure to do so results in and exacerbates such violence. Consequently, the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1) highlighted the need to secure gender equality and protect women's human rights as one of six key areas for action for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women.

16. The protection of women and girls from violence, including rape and other forms of sexual abuse, requires that States have in place a legal framework that is consistent with their international obligations pertaining to the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls. All of the 29 States that submitted information for the present report are party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

17. A State's constitutional framework guides the enactment of legislation and policies, including those on violence against women. Several States that submitted information for the present report highlighted constitutional provisions pertaining to

¹⁴ See A/62/213, A/HRC/4/5, A/HRC/4/3, E/CN.4/2006/115, A/HRC/7/67, A/HRC/4/6, A/HRC/7/18, A/HRC/4/14, E/CN.4/2006/34, A/HRC/7/26, A/HRC/7/22, A/62/354 and A/HRC/6/19.

equality before the law (Qatar), equal protection of the law and recourse in case of violations of rights and freedoms (Canada, Estonia), equal rights of men and women and the State's obligation to ensure that such equality exists in practice (Turkey) and protection against violence (Thailand), including in the family (Paraguay).

18. Several States, including Chile, Estonia, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland, confirmed their commitment to enhancing the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and some have in place national action plans. States are increasingly working with multilateral organizations in according priority to the protection of women's rights in the context of armed conflict through prevention, protecting civilians and addressing impunity. Civilian as well as military and police personnel scheduled to participate in peacekeeping operations are being trained on gender equality, violence against women and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

B. Protection measures

19. National action plans and programmes form part of the strategies to prevent and address violence against women and girls in many States, including Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Such plans and programmes frequently deal with violence against women in general (for example, Argentina and Slovakia) or target family or domestic violence (for example, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica and Lithuania). A number of States have updated earlier plans or adopted new plans.

20. Of the States that provided information for the present report, only the United Kingdom reported having in place a plan that specifically targets sexual violence. In April 2007, the Government launched a cross-Government action plan on sexual violence and abuse. The plan drew on responses to the consultation paper entitled "Convicting Rapists and Protecting Victims — Justice for Victims of Rape", and includes input from across the whole of Government, reflecting the wide-ranging implications of such crimes. The plan sets out steps to deliver key objectives on sexual violence and abuse, and has three major aims: to improve access to health and support services for victims; to improve the way in which the criminal justice system responds to sexual offences; and to maximize opportunities to prevent such crimes. One key element of the plan is to develop national service guidelines for responding to the needs of child victims of sexual abuse, adult survivors of such abuse and adult victims of recent sexual violence.

21. Little information was provided about special measures to protect vulnerable groups of women against rape and other forms of sexual violence. Canada indicated that refugee applicants who are victims of sexual violence may qualify for priority processing under the Urgent Protection Programme of the Canadian Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Programme.

C. Measures pertaining to the justice system

22. Many countries, including those that submitted information for the present report, have in place legislation to address rape and other forms of sexual assault. However, studies indicate that only a small number of rapes are reported to the

police, and an even lower percentage result in convictions. The United Kingdom noted that less than 6 per cent of recorded rapes resulted in a conviction and less than 15 per cent came to the attention of the police because many victims did not tell anyone about their experiences. Surveys of the prevalence of violence against women in seven countries showed that, on average, between 4 and 13 per cent of sexual assaults by non-partners were reported. Of those, less than 7 per cent resulted in formal charges. In nine of the countries studied, women were less likely to report sexual violence by a non-partner than to report physical violence. In six countries, between 6 and 16 per cent of sexual assaults by partners were reported, and in one country, reporting was substantially higher, at 39 per cent. Overall, only 1 to 5 per cent of all acts of violence against women resulted in convictions.¹⁵ Reforms of criminal law and criminal procedure have aimed to improve the effectiveness of criminal justice systems in responding to sexual offences, achieving increases in reporting and reducing attrition and appeal rates by defendants.

23. The content of legislation on rape and other forms of sexual violence determines the criminal liability of the perpetrator and is indicative of the degree of seriousness with which legislators regard such crimes. Legislation in Australia, for example, emphasizes sexual autonomy and positive consent standards, while in Greece and San Marino sexual violence and rape are classified as crimes against sexual freedom. The criminal code of the Russian Federation covers offences against the sexual inviolability and sexual freedom of the individual. In April 2005, new legislation in Sweden strengthened the absolute right of every person to personal and sexual integrity and sexual self-determination.

24. Chile amended its sexual violence legislation of 2004 to eliminate references to indecent abuse and to cover sexual abuse, while in Costa Rica a law on violence against women adopted in 2007 criminalizes a range of actions and provides for the protection of victims. In Turkey, sexual offences are now classified as crimes against individuals and no longer as crimes against society.

25. Criminal codes distinguish between different types of sexual crimes. For example, the penal code of Sweden covers a range of sexual crimes, namely, sexual violence against adults (rape, sexual coercion and sexual exploitation of a person in a position of dependency), sexual violence against children (rape of a child, sexual exploitation of a child and sexual abuse of a child) and sexual molestation, which covers sexual violence against adults as well as children.

26. Under the criminal code of Canada, rape and any other form of sexual activity in which there is no consent is considered sexual assault, including within marriage. In Costa Rica, the 2007 law abolished a provision whereby a perpetrator who married the victim would escape punishment. Sweden extended the definition of rape and lowered the requirement of force in 2005 so that rape now encompasses most serious cases of sexual exploitation. In 2007, Thailand amended the criminal code to expand the definition of rape so that all types of sexual penetration are covered by the law. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 of the United Kingdom also expanded the definition of rape.

27. States are increasingly criminalizing rape within marriage (Cyprus, since 1994; Liechtenstein, since 2001; Greece, since 2006; and Thailand, since 2007),

¹⁵ H. Johnson, N. Ollus and S. Nevala, *Violence Against Women: An International Perspective* (New York, Springer-Verlag, 2007).

including within cohabitational partnerships. Since April 2004, the prosecution of that crime has been pursued on an *ex officio* basis in Switzerland, while in Liechtenstein victims of rape or sexual coercion within marriage or cohabitational relationships must file criminal charges against the perpetrator. In Costa Rica, the 2007 law covers forms of violence within marriage and in common law unions.

28. Penalties vary, but it appears that in all countries that provided information on the issue rape is punishable by imprisonment, for terms ranging from a minimum of one year (Germany) to life in prison for aggravated sexual assault (Canada). Turkey has increased penalties for honour and custom killings. Since 2005, double criminality is no longer necessary in Sweden to sentence offenders for serious sexual crimes committed abroad against children under the age of 18. Several States emphasized that special provisions apply when the victim is a minor.

29. Criminal procedure can be used to protect victims/witnesses, and States increasingly use this area of the law for the benefit of victims of rape or sexual assault. As part of its comprehensive review of the justice system, Jamaica is undertaking research and analysis on procedural law that tends to be prejudicial to female complainants in sexual offences cases.

30. Since 1 April 2006, victims of sexual (and violent) crimes in the Netherlands are, under certain conditions, entitled to free legal assistance from a specialist lawyer, irrespective of their economic situation. Such assistance is available in the criminal process and in civil procedure aimed at obtaining compensation. In Sweden, a victim of sexual assault is entitled to free legal counsel from the initiation of preliminary investigations. A request for such assistance can be made to a police officer, a public prosecutor or a district court. In Finland, victims of sexual offences are entitled at trial to counsel at the expense of the State.

31. Special provisions are in place in some countries to assist victims and witnesses when testifying against perpetrators, such as allowing questioning in a room separate from the perpetrator (Liechtenstein), outside the courtroom by closed circuit television or behind a screen (Canada). Victims may also be accompanied by a person who can provide support. In Canada, Finland, Liechtenstein and Paraguay, for example, personnel from victim support centres accompany victims throughout the criminal legal process. Some States now ensure greater protection of the identity and privacy of victims (Canada and Liechtenstein). In Slovakia, a 2002 law, which was amended in May 2006, increased the compensation to which victims of rape, sexual violence and sexual abuse may be entitled.

32. Several responses, including that of Germany, noted that relevant provisions of the Statute of the International Criminal Court (i.e., article 7(1)(g)), have been incorporated into the legal framework, while the criminal code of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia contains provisions on rape and sexual violence in articles covering crimes against humanity and war crimes against civilian populations. Sweden highlighted its universal jurisdiction for crimes covered by its Act relating to the punishment of genocide and for crimes against international law. It criminalizes as crimes against international law acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence which can, when committed in the context of and associated with an armed conflict and under conditions stipulated in international law, constitute war crimes. If a crime is committed by a member of the armed forces, the lawful superior is also to be sentenced insofar as he was able to foresee the crime but failed to perform his duty to prevent it. Estonia indicated that punishment for relevant acts

against civilians may range from six years to life imprisonment. Its penal law applies to acts committed within, as well as outside, the territory of Estonia if such acts constitute a criminal offence pursuant to the penal law of Estonia and the offender is a member of the defence forces performing his or her duties.

D. Services and support for victims

33. Countries are increasingly working to strengthen and consolidate support systems for victims of violence and to develop and enhance specialized services for victims of sexual violence. Germany and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, for example, consider cooperation between governmental institutions and non-governmental support agencies to be a key factor for successful action. As a consequence, public entities increasingly work in partnership with civil society organizations, as is the case in Thailand. Measures are also being considered — for example in the United Kingdom — to improve the capacity and sustainability of service providers.

34. Support for victims of crime is frequently grounded in legislation, as in Estonia, where the Victim Support Act of 2004 establishes an entitlement for all victims of crime, including of sexual abuse. The Victims Assistance Act, which entered into force in Liechtenstein in April 2008, has two pillars, counselling and financial assistance. The law in Switzerland, relating to this issue has three pillars, namely, counselling, compensation and the protection of victims' rights in criminal proceedings. A victims' charter is being prepared by the Government of Jamaica following a series of public consultations, and a draft law in San Marino would provide services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

35. Specialized rape crisis centres have been established in a number of countries to provide support and guidance for persons who have been sexually assaulted or abused, as well as for their families. Such centres are a resource for victims, as in Finland and Switzerland, but also a source of expertise for policymakers and administrators, providing insight into the realities of those affected, as in Germany. The United Kingdom maintains and continues to expand a network of sexual assault referral centres, where victims receive medical care and counselling and can undergo forensic examinations. In Finland, young people who have been subjected to sexual violence can receive expert help under the Child and Youth Policy Development Programme of 2007.

36. Hospitals and health-care systems provide services to women victims of sexual violence, including mental health care. They may be the competent forensic service for issuing medical expert reports to support investigation of crimes of sexual violence, as in Greece. The National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence against Women at Uppsala University in Sweden has developed a national programme for the care of victims of sexual crimes within the health-care system. Some Swiss cantons have created specialized counselling centres in hospitals for victims of sexual violence. One-stop crisis centres have been established in several hospitals in Thailand to provide counselling, legal assistance, treatment and support for recovery and rehabilitation to victims of all forms of violence against women. Chile is providing differentiated and specialized assistance and is responding to the needs of particularly vulnerable victims, including victims of sexual offences.

Slovakia is drafting guidelines for medical professionals on the provision of health care to women threatened by violence.

37. The police response is critical in ensuring that girls and women victims of rape or sexual assault obtain redress for the crimes committed against them and in preventing impunity for perpetrators. Increasingly, countries are providing specialized training or have put in place designated units to handle such crimes. For example, the centre for the protection of children, youth and women within the police force of Thailand provides assistance to those who have been assaulted or sexually abused.

38. Shelters for women victims of violence exist in many countries, as do hotlines and helplines, but little information was provided about specialized support and advice for victims of sexual violence. Since 2005, a model programme of assistance to women and children victims of violence against sexual integrity in the region of Córdoba, Argentina, has been linked to a shelter for women. Argentina also reported that in 5 per cent of calls placed on hotlines in the first quarter of 2008 references were made to sexual violence.

E. Strategies for prevention, prosecution and monitoring

39. Priority is accorded to efforts to prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence in national action plans. Such efforts respond to the constitutional and international legal obligations of States to protect women against gender-based violence.

40. The Office of the Prosecutor General of Finland organizes training in connection with sexual and violent offences against women and children. As that is one of the areas of focus for the prosecution system of Finland in 2008, five special prosecutors have been briefed on such offences. Mexico has implemented a training programme for staff of the Office of the Special Prosecutor responsible for investigating violence against women and trafficking in persons on interview techniques for victims of sexual violence, while the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia trains law enforcement officials at all levels. The Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority of Sweden is developing a training programme for police, prosecutors and court employees to improve the treatment of victims of sexual crimes. In Turkey, the Ministry of Justice provides training for judges and prosecutors on violence against women, honour and custom killings and related legislation. The United Kingdom introduced sexual offences training for police and barristers prosecuting in serious sexual offences trials. Specialist rape prosecutors and rape coordinators in every Crown Prosecution Service area will receive specialist training and be required to meet minimum standards of expertise.

41. In Chile, sexual offences are investigated by specialized officers, who are periodically trained. A model for support to affected women has been in development since 2006 and will become effective in 2008. In 2006, Luxembourg created a new cell within the police force with responsibility for preventing and eliminating sexual abuse and rape, as well as for investigating sexual offences and disappearances. The Office of the Special Prosecutor of Mexico has the responsibility of investigating and prosecuting crimes covered in the 2007 law on violence against women.

42. Argentina developed a protocol for the police relating to the treatment of victims of violence to be used in all police commissariats. The Ministries of Health and of the Interior of Chile have formed a working group to develop a protocol relating to the treatment of victims of sexual violence, and the United Kingdom is working to adopt a protocol to ensure early cooperation between investigators and prosecutors to improve performance and services for victims of rape. In the period 2007-2008, the Crown Prosecution Service introduced a new performance monitoring system for rape cases, to measure compliance with policy and assess the quality of decision-making and feedback to the police. Indicators used by the Service include the monitoring of its performance in prosecuting rape and sexual offences.

43. Research and collection of data provide important guidance to policymakers and service providers, as they can clarify facts, evaluate the impact of measures taken and point out gaps requiring action. Australia provided funding for research on the prosecution of sexual offences, resulting in two publications, *Recidivism of Sexual Assault Offenders* and *Prosecutorial Decisions in Adult Sexual Assault Cases*, which have been used to inform law reform and offender treatment. The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies of Cyprus, a non-profit organization, has received funding from the European Commission Daphne II programme to implement a transnational project entitled "Date rape cases among young women: strategies for support and prevention". The project was launched in August 2006 and will run for two years. It will investigate the incidence of date rape among female students in five countries — Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, Malta and Lithuania — exploring attitudes, dating experiences and levels of awareness of this issue. It will also promote awareness among beneficiaries and target groups and make policy recommendations for the prevention of date rape and the provision of support to victims.

44. Data on crimes covered in penal codes can be derived from crime statistics, and States are improving the way in which such data is collected. Crime statistics have been improved in Sweden as well as in Slovakia, which now disaggregates by sex the data set of the injured person. In Switzerland, the statistical system is under review and will include an evaluation of crime statistics on domestic violence. The national machinery for the advancement of women has commissioned a study covering all forms of intimate partner violence, which is expected to be completed by June 2009. Turkey has started national field research on domestic violence against women, and in 2007 Thailand initiated a database on victims of violence.

45. Costa Rica implemented various measures against sexual violence and teenage pregnancy in 2005, 2006 and 2007, aimed at sensitizing public officials and raising awareness about sexual abuse. In Mexico, the adoption in 2007 of a comprehensive law on the right of women to a life free from violence generated an extensive nationwide debate about the need to eliminate traditional practices of violence against women.

F. Resources to prevent and respond to rape and sexual violence

46. States are allocating dedicated resources for preventing and addressing rape and sexual violence. Such investments are especially important as the cost of violence against women, including rape and sexual assault, becomes better known.

For example, in 2005 the Home Office of the United Kingdom published the results of a research study showing that every adult rape cost more than £76,000. This calculation was based on the emotional and physical impact of the rape, lost output and the costs to the health and criminal justice systems.

47. Governments provide resources to non-governmental organizations and service providers to expand and improve services for victims, and several States, including Australia, Canada, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, have increased those resources in the period 2007-2008. Mexico, as well as Paraguay — in cooperation with Spain — are expanding services for women victims of violence.

48. Many States make financial contributions towards United Nations entities' activities relating to gender equality, including the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women.

IV. Measures taken by the United Nations system

49. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution 62/134, called upon States and the United Nations system (a) to support all efforts to address rape; (b) to integrate the needs of victims into United Nations humanitarian assistance programmes; and (c) to assign adequate resources to efforts to eliminate violence against women.

50. Many entities of the United Nations system implement activities aimed at the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women. In accordance with resolution 62/133, an oral report on such activities will be presented to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session. Paragraphs 51 to 70 below cover entities' efforts to address rape and sexual violence, including the collection of information in that regard. Several entities have expanded their efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations and to integrate the needs of victims of sexual violence into humanitarian assistance programmes. Sixteen entities provided input for the preparation of the present report.

A. Support for all efforts to eliminate rape

51. The specific experience of women and girls in armed conflict is linked to their status in society. If a culture of violence and discrimination against women and girls exists prior to conflict, it will be exacerbated during conflict. According to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, women and girls are at risk not only during heightened conflict but also during periods of calm, and acts of sexual violence are committed by members of military, militia, police, rebel and former rebel forces, as well as by teachers, parents and criminal gangs.

1. Strengthening the knowledge base, including the development of tools and data collection

52. Entities are developing tools and resources for use by various stakeholders to enhance prevention, respond more effectively to rape and sexual violence, end impunity, prosecute perpetrators and monitor the impact of measures taken. Together with the Global Forum for Health Research, the World Health

Organization (WHO) supported the development of the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, which aims to build a network of researchers, policymakers, activists and other stakeholders to ensure that sexual violence is addressed from the perspective of various disciplines. A conference on the subject is planned for 2009, and a meeting on strengthening the health sector response to sexual violence will take place in June 2009.

53. WHO developed guidelines, entitled "*Clinical management of rape survivors: developing protocols for use with refugees and internally displaced persons*" (updated in 2005) in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross to support the establishment of rape services in emergency settings. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, in collaboration with UNHCR, is planning to publish guidelines that will focus on security of person for women and gender-based violence as a result of war and armed conflict.

54. In 2008, OHCHR will issue two legal position papers on various aspects of access to justice for victims of sexual violence. Those papers will provide the basis for the development of guidelines and learning resources. The Office is planning to convene a conference on the theme "Seeking justice: getting law" in September 2008 to address the obstacles that women survivors of sexual violence face in transitional justice contexts.

55. Challenges in collecting, analysing and disseminating data on rape persist, and are exacerbated in conflict and emergency situations. Entities of the United Nations system are working to address them. A consultative meeting of experts convened by WHO in 2007 resulted in the development of the *WHO ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies* to address the many serious ethical and safety issues related to information collection. UNHCR has developed a standard reporting format which is used by its country offices to compile data on reported incidents of sexual and gender-based violence. Such data was first published in the *UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2006*. The Office, with support from UNFPA and the International Rescue Committee, is also working to streamline data collection by non-governmental organizations that provide services to survivors and to enhance the use of such data for programming purposes.

56. United Nations entities collect certain data. For example, the OHCHR office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo documents acts of sexual violence committed by State agents, mainly members of the police and military, as well as armed groups. Efforts are also in place to enhance the capacity of various stakeholders to collect data on rape and sexual violence. For example, UNHCR works to enhance the capacity of staff and health partners to collect data pertaining to rape from refugee camp populations.

57. Efforts are also in place to enhance systematic reporting on rape and sexual violence. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, for example, works to ensure that reports of the Secretary-General to intergovernmental bodies, including the Security Council, highlight steps being taken to combat sexual and gender-based violence. The child protection unit of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has established a data collection system and provides statistics on the rape of girls for various reports.

2. Awareness-raising and advocacy

58. Entities of the United Nations system work to focus global attention on the issue of rape and sexual violence, as well as to mobilize communities to combat the practice. The Department of Public Information has produced several television features on the widespread prevalence of rape in conflict zones. The Department has worked with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to highlight the efforts of the United Nations, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and non-governmental organizations to combat rape. Together with HBO, the Department of Public Information sponsored the screening, in New York in April 2008, of a film on sexual violence, which was followed by a panel discussion. The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues is working to enhance coordination, raise awareness and build the institutional capacities of key stakeholders within the United Nations system and at the national level for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). It coordinated the preparation of the system-wide action plan for the implementation of the resolution for the period 2008-2009, which also addresses violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations. In cooperation with the respective regional commissions, the Office organized two high-level policy dialogues, in Santiago (November 2007) and Addis Ababa (February 2008), on the national implementation of the resolution.

59. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) supports community mobilization efforts to prevent and respond to rape and sexual violence. In Rwanda, it facilitated the establishment of a gender-based violence committee that trained and sensitized residents on the prevention of sexual violence against women. In Burundi, the Fund contributed to the training of women journalists on the penal code and efforts to combat rape. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, UNIFEM supported the production of radio programmes on care for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

3. Capacity-building, including training

60. United Nations entities are intensifying their efforts at the country and regional levels to build the capacities of Member States and other actors to respond to rape and sexual violence, including in conflict and post-conflict and emergency situations. Their work contributes to the establishment of effective legal and policy frameworks. Several United Nations entities supported the Government of Liberia in the development and implementation of its national action plan on sexual and gender-based violence. Gender units in several peacekeeping missions assist national mechanisms for the advancement of women in the development of action plans where these do not exist, to eliminate rape and other forms of sexual violence. In Liberia and Zimbabwe, UNFPA provided reproductive health kits as well as training for clinical management in rape cases.

61. Entities of the United Nations system provide training for various stakeholders to prevent and respond to rape and sexual violence. Several United Nations missions, including those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, the Sudan (Darfur), Sierra Leone, Haiti, the Central African Republic, Chad and Timor-Leste, have intensified training activities on violence against women for national police and the military, as well as civilian, police and military mission personnel. MINUSTAH has supported the judicial system, police and health authorities, as well

as professional and non-governmental organizations, in responding to cases of sexual violence. The OHCHR office in Uganda has carried out training for paralegals on sexual violence. UNIFEM targeted 30 local non-governmental organizations in Iraq with capacity-building activities on sexual and gender-based violence.

62. Reforms in the justice and security sectors in post-conflict societies provide opportunities to increase attention to women's security needs, including the prevention of, and response to, rape and sexual violence. Several entities, including UNIFEM, the United Nations Development Programme and OHCHR, have shared their experiences in the context of relevant reform processes and supported capacity-building activities.

4. Access to justice and services

63. Efforts are also in place to enhance access to justice for women victims of rape and sexual violence. For example, UNFPA supported Liberia in the establishment of a special court for the prosecution of rape cases. The OHCHR office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has directed action towards the investigation of cases of sexual violence and the monitoring of judicial investigations and trials. Since 2004, the Office has been leading the judicial component of the joint initiative against sexual violence, an inter-agency programme, with the aim of providing an integrated response to victims in five provinces.

64. Several entities, in particular WHO and UNFPA, are working to strengthen the health sector response to rape and sexual violence. WHO, for example, has developed training programmes for health providers, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings (Burundi, the Congo, Liberia and the Sudan). Based on a dialogue between UNFPA and the Government of the Sudan, survivors of sexual violence can access health services directly without first having to visit the police.

5. Responding to rape and sexual violence in conflict

65. The United Nations system has stepped up its response to sexual violence and violence perpetrated against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations and the changing patterns of such violence. In January 2008, gender advisers and gender focal points from 12 multidimensional and 7 traditional (ceasefire monitoring) peacekeeping missions identified sexual and gender-based violence as one of their priority areas of focus for the following 12 months. Gender units in those missions are forming partnerships with entities of the United Nations system in the promotion of the rights of women and girls and in efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence.

66. UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict was launched in 2007 to intensify and better coordinate the United Nations system's response to sexual violence during and after armed conflict. This concerted effort by 12 United Nations system entities aims to improve coordination and accountability, expand programming and advocacy and support national efforts to prevent sexual violence in armed conflict and respond effectively to the needs of survivors. The activities of UN Action are structured around three pillars: support for country-level action; advocacy for action; and learning by doing. UN Action is supporting United Nations integrated missions and country teams, in particular in the Sudan (Darfur), Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where it funds the post of a Senior

Adviser/Coordinator on sexual violence, who advises the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. UN Action has also offered strategic support to the country teams in Haiti and Kenya.

B. Integrating the needs of victims into United Nations humanitarian assistance programmes

67. The Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee works for the integration of gender perspectives as a cross-cutting issue into the Standing Committee's cluster approach and into other elements of humanitarian reform. The Sub-Working Group's *Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings* aims to enable communities, Governments and humanitarian organizations, including United Nations entities and non-governmental and civil society organizations, to establish and coordinate the implementation of a set of minimum multisectoral interventions to prevent and respond to sexual violence during the early phase of an emergency.

68. The *UNHCR Handbook for the Protection of Displaced Women and Girls* of 2008 gives guidance on addressing the problems and risks faced by refugee women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence. The Office's global strategic objectives include a specific objective related to sexual and gender-based violence, namely, that 100 per cent of UNHCR operations will have in place standard operating procedures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. Since the introduction of that objective in 2006, UNHCR has noted progress in that area.

69. One of the key strategies of UNFPA is to work with the police throughout conflict and post-conflict areas. In Darfur, UNFPA-supported gender-based violence committees have worked with the African Union civil police to arrange escorts for women and girls during the collection of firewood, as well as to monitor camps for internally displaced persons. UNFPA has sensitized teams of journalists on the complexities of reporting on gender-based violence cases in emergencies in a number of countries, including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire. UNIFEM and UNFPA collaborated with the Government of Kenya and non-governmental organizations to integrate gender issues into emergency responses and ensure the integration of prevention and response strategies on gender-based violence into all aspects of humanitarian aid.

C. Resources for efforts to eliminate violence against women

70. Not only are resources available at the level of individual entities; the inter-agency United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, administered by UNIFEM, supports activities by various stakeholders. There is some indication that entities are increasing resources for such work. For example, UNHCR allocated an additional \$3.8 million in 2007 to reinforce activities related to sexual and gender-based violence in country operations.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

71. The present report complements the Secretary-General's report on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (A/62/201). Since the adoption of resolution 62/134, the Security Council has taken action on the question of sexual violence and will continue to consider this issue in the context of situations on its agenda (resolution 1820 (2008)).

72. Member States in general address rape and sexual violence within the overall context of their holistic approach to addressing violence against women. The General Assembly may therefore wish to consider this issue in future in the context of its ongoing work on the elimination of all forms of violence against women. It may wish to encourage States to accord particular attention to the issue of rape and sexual violence in legislation, policies and programmes and to services for victims, and to end impunity for such crimes.

73. States, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, should ensure that they have in place, strengthen and effectively implement legal and policy frameworks to protect women and girls from rape, including marital rape, and sexual violence, and end impunity for perpetrators. It is critical that the scope and coverage of legislation is commensurate with the severity of the offence, and that criminal codes use a broad provision covering a range of sexual assaults/crimes and a definition of rape that is based on coercive circumstances or a lack of consent of the victim, and includes marital rape. Rape and sexual violence should be defined as violations of women's right to bodily integrity, and there should be no mitigation of sentences in rape cases where the perpetrator marries the victim. Punishment of perpetrators should be comparable to that for other crimes of similar severity. Measures should be in place to assist victims in criminal procedure, such as free legal assistance, support in court proceedings and protection of the rights of victims/witnesses (privacy and identity), as well as in civil compensation claims.

74. Women continue to be victims of rape and sexual violence, perpetrated by intimate partners as well as non-partners, in many settings. They are at particular risk in certain situations, including in conflict and post-conflict settings. Studies indicate, however, that only a small percentage of such crimes come to the attention of the police, and an even smaller number result in convictions. Shame, fear of retaliation from their families or communities, as well as fear of being re-victimized by the criminal justice system, often prevents women from seeking redress.

75. It is therefore critical that States have in place an environment that encourages victims of rape and sexual violence to seek and obtain justice and redress and is conducive to ending impunity. Access by victims/survivors to justice must be enhanced by ensuring that the criminal justice system responds effectively to sexual offences and achieves higher reporting and conviction rates. Specialized training for all professionals who come into contact with victims of rape and sexual violence, including police, prosecutors, legal, judicial and health professionals and social workers is critical. Protocols should be in place in all relevant services to ensure consistent professionalism and standards of treatment of victims, and adherence should be systematically monitored.

76. Given the often devastating impact of such crimes, States should continue to focus in particular on the prevention and elimination of rape and sexual violence. States should consider adopting plans that specifically target the prevention of and response to sexual violence, expand monitoring and evaluation of their efforts and disseminate lessons learned and good practices so as to facilitate the sharing of experiences.

77. States, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, should intensify efforts to improve access to health and support services for victims/survivors, such as specialized rape crisis centres that offer a full range of services.

78. States should increase their efforts at data collection, support research to strengthen policymaking and continue to undertake awareness-raising and prevention activities. They should provide resources for work to end violence against women, including rape and sexual violence.

79. States should place particular emphasis on preventing and responding to rape and sexual violence against vulnerable groups of women. They may wish to encourage the entities of the United Nations system to strengthen their support for the efforts of States to address rape and sexual violence perpetrated against women, especially in situations of conflict and its aftermath, and in humanitarian settings.



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**Advancement of women: implementation of the outcome
of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the
twenty-third special session of the General Assembly**

Measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, which is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/137, provides information on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women by examining the extent to which intergovernmental bodies have paid attention to gender perspectives in their work. The report also assesses, as requested by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 2006/9, the impact of the input of the Commission on the Status of Women on discussions within the United Nations system.

* A/63/150.



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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 62/137, requested the Secretary-General to continue to report annually to the Assembly, under the agenda item "Advancement of women", and to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, on follow-up to and progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The Council, in its resolution 2006/9, requested the Secretary-General to include in the present report an assessment of the impact of the Commission's input to discussions within the United Nations system (see E/2008/53).

2. The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women monitor the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Reports on gender mainstreaming are submitted to those three bodies on an annual basis. Reports submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women focus on the progress made in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes in relation to the priority theme under consideration by the Commission. Reports to the Economic and Social Council examine the initiatives being undertaken by the entities of the United Nations to mainstream a gender perspective into policies and programmes. Reports to the General Assembly focus on the attention given to gender equality in intergovernmental processes.

3. The present report examines the extent to which intergovernmental bodies have paid attention to gender perspectives in their work, focusing on the sixty-second session of the General Assembly and the 2007 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and the work of its functional commissions, including the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women.¹

II. Attention to gender equality in intergovernmental processes

A. Sixty-second session of the General Assembly

4. The General Assembly plays a critical role in advancing global policies for gender equality and the empowerment of women and promoting their full implementation. During its sixty-second session, documentation for and outcomes of the Assembly contributed to moving the policy agenda forward. Advances were made by the Assembly in particular in two key policy areas: violence against women and women and development. Attention was also paid to the importance of the gender mainstreaming strategy in achieving gender equality, including through collection and use of sex-disaggregated data to inform policymaking.

5. This section provides some illustrative examples of means by which the General Assembly advanced the policy agenda for gender equality and the empowerment of women during its sixty-second session.

¹ The period under review for the preparation of the report is May 2007 to May 2008. Information contained herein is based on documentation and outcomes of intergovernmental processes as available in the United Nations Official Document System unless otherwise specified.

1. Work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees

6. Under the agenda item "Advancement of women", the Third Committee paid specific attention to gender equality and the empowerment of women, including in relation to the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, violence against women migrant workers, and improvement of the situation of women in rural areas. The Second Committee considered women in development, under the agenda item "Eradication of poverty and other development issues". In addition to considering agenda items specifically focused on women and gender equality, the General Assembly and its Main Committees, in particular its Second and Third Committees, continued to address gender perspectives across a broad spectrum of policy areas.

Violence against women and girls

7. The elimination of violence against women, a pervasive violation of women's human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality, was an area of strong focus of the work of the General Assembly, including on social development and humanitarian emergencies and assistance.² Explicit attention was paid by the Assembly to violence against women and girls, including, inter alia, young women and girls affected by armed conflict, refugees and other persons of concern, survivors of genocide, internally displaced persons, women human rights defenders, victims of trafficking, women migrant workers, rural women, and victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel.³

8. The General Assembly's consideration of the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women continued to move the global policy agenda forward. Building on the report of the Secretary-General before the Assembly (A/62/201), the Assembly reiterated the need to intensify efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in resolution 62/133. It welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to spearhead a multi-year system-wide campaign to eliminate violence against women and girls through 2015, focusing on global advocacy, United Nations leadership and strengthened efforts and partnerships at the national and regional levels. The Assembly called upon the international community, including the United Nations system and regional and subregional organizations, to support national efforts to promote the empowerment of women and gender equality in order to enhance national efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls, including in the development and implementation of national action plans on the elimination of violence against women and girls. In addition, the Assembly stressed that adequate resources should be assigned to those bodies, specialized agencies, funds and programmes responsible for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights and to efforts throughout the United Nations system to eliminate violence against women and girls.

9. The General Assembly took another critical step forward with the adoption of resolution 62/134 entitled "Eliminating rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations, including in conflict and related situations", in which the Assembly urged Member States to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence and to end impunity by ensuring that all rape victims,

² See resolutions 62/131 and 62/94 and 62/95, respectively.

³ See resolutions 62/126, 62/125, 62/96, 62/153, 62/152, 62/176, 62/132, 62/136 and 62/214, respectively.

particularly women and girls, have equal protection under the law and equal access to justice and by investigating, prosecuting and punishing any person responsible for rape and other forms of sexual violence.

10. The General Assembly adopted resolution 62/138 entitled "Supporting efforts to end obstetric fistula", which stressed the interlinkages between, inter alia, early childbearing, early marriage, violence against young women and girls and gender discrimination as root causes of obstetric fistula. The Assembly stressed that States have the obligation to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls, exercise due diligence in order to prevent, investigate and punish the perpetrators of violence against women and girls, and provide protection to the victims. It urged States to enact and strictly enforce laws concerning the minimum legal age of consent and the minimum age for marriage and to raise the minimum age for marriage where necessary, and called upon States to take all necessary measures to ensure the right of women and girls to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, including sexual and reproductive health.

11. Girls are often at greater risk of various forms of discrimination and violence, as recognized by the General Assembly in resolution 62/140 entitled "The girl child".⁴ In the resolution the Assembly reaffirmed the need to achieve gender equality, including through partnering with men and boys as an important strategy for advancing the rights of the girl child. It stressed the importance of the substantive assessment of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action from a life-cycle approach. In resolution 62/141, "Rights of the child", the Assembly urged States to address the gender dimension of all forms of violence against children, and to incorporate a gender perspective in all policies adopted and actions taken to protect children against all forms of violence. In particular, the Assembly called upon States to take all necessary and effective measures, including legal reforms, where appropriate, to eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls and all forms of violence, including female infanticide and prenatal sex selection, rape, sexual abuse and harmful traditional or customary practices.

12. Drawing on documentation before it, including the biennial report of the Secretary-General (A/62/177),⁵ the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/132 entitled "Violence against women migrant workers", which called upon all Governments to incorporate a human rights and gender perspective in legislation and policies on international migration and on labour and employment, inter alia, for the prevention and protection of migrant women from violence and discrimination, exploitation and abuse, and to take effective measures to ensure that these do not reinforce discrimination and bias against women.

Women and development

13. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, Member States resolved to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable.

⁴ See also resolution 62/126.

⁵ See also A/62/218.

14. Drawing on the biennial report on women in development (A/62/187), the General Assembly, in resolution 62/206, urged an acceleration of efforts to increase the number of women in decision-making, build their capacity as agents of change, and empower them to participate actively and effectively in the development, implementation and evaluation of national development and/or poverty eradication policies, strategies and programmes. Member States were urged to incorporate a gender perspective, commensurate with gender equality goals, into the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of national development strategies, and to ensure inclusive and more effective participation of national mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment in formulating such strategies, including poverty eradication strategies.

15. In addition to consideration of the sub-agenda item "Women in development", the General Assembly recognized the central importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women in development under other agenda items. For example, in resolution 62/131, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly", the Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to the empowerment of women and gender equality, including the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all development efforts, as critical for achieving sustainable development and for efforts to combat hunger, poverty and disease. The Assembly also called for strengthening of policies and programmes that increase the full participation of women in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life, as equal partners, and their access to all resources.

16. The General Assembly recognized the importance of the rights of women and implementation of a gender mainstreaming strategy in the process of realizing the right to development.⁶ It noted that particular attention must be given, in the context of globalization, to the objective of protecting, promoting and enhancing the rights and welfare of women and girls.⁷ The Assembly recommended that global partnerships should foster the elimination of all forms of discrimination, including gender-based discrimination in employment and occupation,⁸ and called on multilateral financial institutions to take into account the importance of gender-sensitive employment and hunger and poverty eradication policies and strategies.⁹

17. Rural women play a critical role in enhancing rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty. Building on the report of the Secretary-General on improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A/62/202), the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/136 in which it urged Member States, in collaboration with the organizations of the United Nations and civil society, as appropriate, to attach greater importance to the improvement of the situation of rural women, including indigenous women, in their national, regional and global development strategies. Member States were called on to ensure that the perspectives of rural women are taken into account and that they participate in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities related to emergencies, including natural disasters, humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding

⁶ See resolution 62/161.

⁷ See resolution 62/199.

⁸ See resolution 62/211.

⁹ See resolution 62/185.

and post-conflict reconstruction. The Assembly also declared October 15 the International Day of Rural Women.

18. In resolution 62/190 entitled "Agricultural technology for development", the General Assembly reaffirmed that enhancing the role of women at all levels and in all aspects of rural development, agriculture, nutrition and food security is imperative to the implementation of an integrated approach to increasing food production and enhancing food security and food safety in an environmentally sustainable way.

19. In resolution 62/164 entitled "The right to food", the General Assembly encouraged all States to take action to address gender inequality and discrimination against women, in particular where it contributes to the malnutrition of women and girls, including measures to ensure the full and equal realization of the right to food and equal access to resources, including income, land and water. The Assembly encouraged the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and all other United Nations bodies and mechanisms addressing the right to food and food insecurity, to integrate a gender perspective into their relevant policies, programmes and activities.

20. Gender equality in access to, and control over, resources is of paramount importance to achieving sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development. In resolution 62/196 entitled "Sustainable mountain development", which built on the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/292), the General Assembly underlined the need for improved access to resources, including land, for women in mountain regions. The need to strengthen the role of women in mountain regions in decision-making processes that affect their communities, cultures and environments was also noted. The Assembly encouraged Governments and intergovernmental organizations to integrate gender dimensions, including gender-disaggregated indicators, in mountain development activities, programmes and projects.

21. The General Assembly recognized that cooperatives, in their various forms, promote the fullest possible participation in economic and social development of all people, including women. In resolution 62/128, "Cooperatives in social development", which built on the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/154), the Assembly urged Governments, relevant international organizations and specialized agencies, in collaboration with national and international cooperative organizations, to give due consideration to the role and contribution of cooperatives in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits, including the Fourth World Conference on Women.

22. The General Assembly recognized the importance of science and technology in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in resolution 62/207 entitled "Human resources development", which built on the report by the Secretary-General (A/62/308). It called for steps to integrate gender perspectives into human resources development, including through policies, strategies and targeted actions aimed at promoting women's capacities and access to productive activities, and in this regard emphasized the need to ensure the full participation of women.

Gender mainstreaming

23. The General Assembly continued to promote the gender mainstreaming strategy as a critical means for achieving equality between women and men. The report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: the Millennium Development Goals and synergies with other United Nations disability instruments (A/62/157) identified the gender mainstreaming strategy as a model to be followed in the promotion of disability as a cross-cutting theme and to develop programming that effectively addresses all such issues.

24. The General Assembly highlighted the importance of the work of the United Nations system in promoting and achieving gender equality at the national level. A section in resolution 62/208 entitled "Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system" addressed gender equality and women's empowerment.¹⁰ The Assembly reiterated its call to organizations of the United Nations system, within their organizational mandates, to mainstream a gender perspective and to pursue gender equality and the empowerment of women in their country programmes, planning instruments and sector-wide programmes, and articulate specific country-level goals and targets in accordance with national development strategies. It encouraged the governing bodies of United Nations entities to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into all aspects of their monitoring functions in relation to medium-term plans, multi-year funding frameworks and operational activities. The Assembly called for further improvement of institutional accountability mechanisms and qualitative and quantitative reporting on gender equality. It also called for attention to the role of men and boys in gender mainstreaming policies.

25. Noting the adoption of the United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women and the strategy on gender mainstreaming in resolution 62/208, the General Assembly further urged entities to take a coherent and coordinated approach in their work on gender-related issues and to share good practices, tools and methodologies. It called for further enhancement of the effectiveness of gender specialist resources, inter alia, by establishing clear mandates, ensuring adequate training and access to information and to adequate and stable resources, and by increasing the support and participation of senior staff. It also called on entities to continue efforts to achieve gender balance in appointments within the United Nations development system, including appointments of resident coordinators and other high-level posts.

26. The importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in policies and programmes was addressed in a number of different areas, including, inter alia, development,¹¹ implementation and international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development,¹² and emergency humanitarian assistance and disaster reduction.¹³ In resolution 62/99 entitled "Assistance in mine action", for example, the General Assembly urged all States and the United Nations system and relevant organizations and institutions involved in mine action, as appropriate, to provide support for national programmes to reduce the risks posed by landmines and

¹⁰ See also E/2007/52-A/62/73.

¹¹ See, for example, resolutions 62/131, 62/136, 62/185, 62/196 and 62/207.

¹² See resolution 62/179.

¹³ See resolutions 62/91, 62/94 and 62/192.

explosive remnants of war, taking into consideration the differing impacts on women, men, girls and boys. The Assembly also called for the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the promotion of human rights including the right to food; the rights of the child; human rights in the administration of justice; measures to prevent and combat torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.¹⁴

27. The availability of reliable data disaggregated by sex is critical to effectively mainstream gender perspectives in policies and programmes. The collection and use of sex-disaggregated data was highlighted by the General Assembly as a means to inform gender-responsive policymaking and implementation. For example, in resolution 62/132 entitled "Violence against women migrant workers", the Assembly invited Governments, the United Nations system, and other concerned intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to cooperate towards a better understanding of the issues concerning women and international migration, and to improve the collection, dissemination and analysis of sex- and age-disaggregated data and information, in order to both assist in the formulation of migration and labour policies that are gender-sensitive and protect human rights, and facilitate policy assessment.

28. Other instances in which the General Assembly incorporated attention to the importance of sex-disaggregated data for gender-sensitive policymaking included resolution 62/130, "Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing"; resolution 62/127, "Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities"; and resolution 62/126, "Policies and programmes involving youth: youth in the global economy — promoting youth participation in social and economic development".

2. Follow-up to major international conferences and summits and high-level events of the General Assembly

29. In resolution 62/137, the General Assembly urged Governments and all entities of the United Nations system, including United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and all relevant actors of civil society, to ensure the integration of gender perspectives in the implementation of and follow-up to all United Nations summits, conferences and special sessions. Governments were also urged to give attention to gender perspectives in preparation for such events.

Commemorative high-level plenary meeting devoted to the follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children

30. The General Assembly convened a commemorative high-level plenary meeting to evaluate progress made in the implementation of the Declaration and the Plan of Action contained in the document entitled "A world fit for children"¹⁵ in December 2007. In the "Declaration of the commemorative high-level plenary meeting devoted to the follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children", adopted by the Assembly in resolution 62/88, representatives of States were encouraged by

¹⁴ See resolutions 62/164, 62/141, 62/158, 62/148 and 62/220, respectively.

¹⁵ Resolution S-27/2, annex.

progress achieved since 2002 in creating a world fit for children. It was noted, for example, that more educational opportunities are being equally extended to girls and boys. Many challenges were, however, also cited, for example, the fact that a large number of children are still subject to violence, exploitation and abuses, as well as inequity and discrimination, in particular the girl child.

United Nations Climate Change Conference and related events

31. In preparation for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, the General Assembly held a high-level event on climate change entitled "The future in our hands: addressing the leadership challenge of climate change" in September 2007. The background note prepared for the event did not contain attention to gender perspectives.¹⁶ The Conference, held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007, resulted in the adoption of the Bali Road Map, including the Bali Action Plan (see FCCC/CP/2007/6/Add.1), which did not reflect gender perspectives.

32. The General Assembly held a thematic debate entitled "Addressing climate change: the United Nations and the world at work" in February 2008. The report of the Secretary-General, "Overview of United Nations activities in relation to climate change" (A/62/644), noted that the challenge of climate change is unlikely to be gender-neutral as it increases the risk to the most vulnerable and less empowered social groups. In the formulation of global and national approaches, as well as in the strategic responses to specific sectors, gender awareness, substantive analysis and inclusive engagement will be necessary. Attention to gender equality was also included in the report with regard to human settlements and agriculture. It noted that, if not properly managed, the switch in use of productive land from food to biofuels production risks increasing prices of food crops, aggravating food insecurity, and exacerbating rural poverty and gender inequality. Despite these references, gender perspectives were not taken into account in resolution 62/86 entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind".

High-level event on the Millennium Development Goals

33. The General Assembly held a thematic debate on the Millennium Development Goals in April 2008 on the theme "Recognizing the achievements, addressing the challenges and getting back on track to achieve the MDGs by 2015".¹⁷ Panel discussions focused on the Goals related to poverty and hunger, education and health, and took gender perspectives into account. During the panel discussion on education, it was noted that the target of goal 3 to eliminate gender disparity in enrolment for primary and secondary education by 2005 had been missed, but that 118 countries of the 188 with data available were on track or had already achieved gender parity at the primary level. In the panel discussion on health, it was noted that the education and empowerment of women significantly contributed to the improvement of maternal health and a decrease in child mortality.

¹⁶ Background note by the Secretary-General, available at www.un.org/climatechange/2007highlevel/pdf/HLE_Background_Note.pdf.

¹⁷ See www.un.org/ga/president/62/ThematicDebates/MDGsStatements/mdgsummary.pdf.

General Assembly preparation for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus

34. In preparation for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus to be held in Doha, the General Assembly held reviews of the leading action areas of the Monterrey Consensus in the first half of 2008.¹⁸ Gender perspectives were raised in all of the review sessions. In the review of "Mobilizing domestic financial resources for development", it was recognized that although increasing women's contribution to development could benefit all, the Monterrey Consensus had not paid sufficient attention to their role. It was noted that the role of women was critical in formulating and implementing poverty eradication policies, and that the gender aspects of development should be considered beyond the social sectors and encompass other policy areas such as economic growth, the environment, peacebuilding and reconstruction. The review of "Mobilizing international resources for development: foreign direct investment and other private flows" noted the importance of the business sector respecting labour standards, becoming more socially responsible and gender-sensitive, and considering the implications of their undertakings. Emphasis should be given to promoting investments in the social sectors, with a view to addressing asymmetries in resource distribution, furthering social insurance and benefiting women.

35. The review of "International trade as an engine for development" noted that some developed countries had been working with developing country partners to focus efforts on increasing trade benefits for the weakest groups, empowering women and strengthening their participation in trade, and supporting environmental sustainability and trade. During the review of "Increasing international financial and technical cooperation for development", it was noted that aid effectiveness should focus on related issues such as human resource development, gender equality and environmental protection. It was also stressed that the use of official development assistance (ODA) for the empowerment of women could yield a high rate of economic and social return. References were made to proposals for policy targets to increase the share of ODA for gender equality to 10 per cent by 2010 and to 20 per cent by 2050. It was reiterated that all actors should pay attention to gender equality issues in the preparations for the Review Conference. The review of "External debt" noted that additional social expenditures as a result of debt reduction should take especially into account the gender perspective.

36. The review of "Addressing systemic issues: enhancing the coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems in support of development" highlighted the need for mainstreaming a gender perspective into development policies. It was noted that, while significant gender-responsive efforts had been made, further actions were needed to ensure the shift from analysis to implementation. It was also noted that the Commission on the Status of Women had considered various ways to strengthen the advancement of women through the financing for development process at its fifty-second session.

37. In addition to the review sessions on leading action areas, the General Assembly also took up the issue of financing for development in its Second

¹⁸ See www.un.org/esa/ffd/doha/roadmap.htm.

Committee. The report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/62/217) indicated that there are recent innovative experiences of broad social participation and incorporation of gender-responsive approaches in the formulation and monitoring of national and local budgets which have led to increased social expenditures, including a better focus on gender equality. The application of tools such as gender-responsive budgeting is important to improve the effectiveness and targeting of public expenditures. Resolution 62/187 entitled "Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus", which was largely procedural in nature, did not contain attention to gender perspectives.

3. Assessment of the work of the General Assembly

38. To facilitate gender-sensitive outcomes, the General Assembly requested, in resolution 62/137, that reports of the Secretary-General submitted for its consideration should systematically address gender perspectives through qualitative gender analysis and the use of quantitative data where available. Research and analysis for this report indicated that attention to gender perspectives in the work of the Assembly was not systematically included in documentation before or in outcomes of the Assembly, including those related to the follow-up to major international conferences and summits, and high-level dialogues of the Assembly.

39. Overall, documentation submitted to the Third Committee contained significantly more gender analysis than that of other Main Committees. Documentation before the Second Committee and before the General Assembly without reference to a Main Committee also contained attention to gender perspectives, although to a lesser extent.

40. Notably, many reports before the Fifth Committee highlighted work undertaken by United Nations peacekeeping operations to promote gender equality and the advancement of women in their activities, as well as gender balance in personnel.¹⁹ Reports also addressed gender balance in the overall staffing of the United Nations.²⁰ The report of the Secretary-General on improving the effective and efficient delivery of the mandates of development-related activities and revised estimates relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (A/62/708) contained attention to critical gaps in gender equality work in the process of strengthening the development pillar of the United Nations.

41. Documentation before the First, Fourth and Sixth Committees contained minimal gender analysis or attention to gender perspectives. Examples of exceptions included the report on assistance in mine action before the Fourth Committee (A/62/307 and Corr.1-3), the report on the rule of law at the national and international levels: comments and information received from Governments (A/62/121 and Add.1) before the Sixth Committee, and the report entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards" (A/62/278 (Part II)) before the First Committee.

¹⁹ See, for example, A/62/631, A/62/632, A/62/642, A/62/645, A/62/648, A/62/679, A/62/737 and A/62/741. See also reports before the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

²⁰ See, for example, A/62/215 and A/62/707.

42. Gender analysis and/or specific recommendations for action in documentation before the General Assembly did not necessarily translate into gender-sensitive outcomes. In some instances, including the Assembly's consideration of climate change and financing for development, links between gender equality and policy areas presented in documentation before the Assembly were not reflected in outcomes. Other examples included the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions²¹ and Agenda 21.²²

43. A little more than one quarter of the resolutions analysed in preparation for this report contained attention to gender equality issues.²³ Greater attention was paid to gender perspectives in outcomes of the Third Committee than any other Main Committee, with over two thirds of its outcomes drawing attention to gender equality issues and most calling for concrete action to be taken. Over one third of resolutions adopted in the Second Committee, and resolutions adopted without reference to a Main Committee, contained attention to gender perspectives. The outcomes of the Fourth and Fifth Committees took gender perspectives into account to a lesser extent. The First and Sixth Committees did not take gender perspectives into account in their outcomes.

44. Despite the Assembly's call to ensure the integration of gender perspectives in the preparation for as well as in implementation of and follow-up to United Nations summits, conferences and special sessions, this was not systematically done.

4. Subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly

Peacebuilding Commission

45. The report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its first session (A/62/137-S/2007/458) indicated that, in accordance with the system-wide mandate to incorporate a gender perspective in its work, the Commission considered human rights and gender equality issues in both its country-specific work and in thematic discussions. The Commission considered the situations of Burundi and Sierra Leone during its inaugural session. Gender equality was identified as one of the critical priorities to peace consolidation and reduction of the risk of relapse into conflict in Burundi. Gender equality was highlighted as one of the cross-cutting issues needed to address the root causes of conflict in Sierra Leone and lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. In its engagement with Guinea-Bissau, during its second session, the Commission advocated for mainstreaming a gender perspective in the implementation of the country's peacebuilding priorities and existing national strategies and plans.²⁴

Human Rights Council

46. The Human Rights Council considered the human rights of women, including the elimination of violence against women, at its sixth and seventh sessions. At its sixth session, the Council adopted resolution 6/30 in which it decided to incorporate into its programme of work sufficient and adequate time, at minimum an annual

²¹ See document A/62/276 and resolutions 62/86, 62/193 and 62/194.

²² See document A/62/262 and resolution 62/198.

²³ Includes resolutions available through 25 May 2008 available in the United Nations Official Document System.

²⁴ Based on information received from the Peacebuilding Support Office.

full-day meeting, to discuss the human rights of women, including measures that can be adopted by States and other stakeholders, to address human rights violations experienced by women. The Council also decided that the first such meeting should include a discussion on violence against women pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/143.²⁵ The decision also urged all stakeholders to take into full account the rights of women and a gender perspective in the universal periodic review.

47. At its seventh session, the Council considered the report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on indicators on violence against women and State response (A/HRC/7/6). The report noted that the adoption by States, in intergovernmental forums, of a common understanding of violence against women and a set of indicators will stimulate and enhance initiatives to standardize data at the national and international levels, inform the general public and mobilize action. In resolution 7/24 on elimination of violence against women, the Council decided to continue consideration of the issue of the elimination of all forms of violence against women, its causes and consequences, as a matter of high priority, in conformity with its annual programme of work. It also welcomed the February 2008 launch of the campaign of the Secretary-General to end violence against women.

48. A number of reports before the Council during its sixth and seventh sessions incorporated gender perspectives,²⁶ including reports of special rapporteurs and independent experts.²⁷ The report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment (A/HRC/7/3) focused exclusively on strengthening the protection of women from torture.

49. Council resolutions and decisions also took gender equality into account, including resolution 7/9 on human rights of persons with disabilities, resolution 7/10 on human rights and arbitrary deprivation of nationality and resolution 7/14 on the right to food. In resolution 7/29 on the rights of the child, the Council underlined the need for mainstreaming a gender perspective and recognizing the child as a rights holder, in all policies and programmes relating to children.

50. The Council also called on special rapporteurs and other mechanisms to integrate a gender perspective in their respective mandates.²⁸ In resolution 7/22 on human rights and access to safe drinking water and sanitation, the Council decided to appoint, for a period of three years, an independent expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to safe drinking water and sanitation whose task would include applying a gender perspective, including through the identification of gender-specific vulnerabilities. In its resolution 7/12, the Council encouraged the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to apply a gender perspective in its reporting process, including in information collection and the formulation of recommendations.

²⁵ Per this decision, a meeting was held on 8 June 2008.

²⁶ See, for example, A/HRC/6/3 and A/HRC/7/32.

²⁷ See, for example, A/HRC/6/5 and Corr.1, A/HRC/6/6, A/HRC/7/8 and A/HRC/7/11 and Corr.1.

²⁸ See, for example, resolutions 6/2, 6/12, 6/14, 7/34 and 7/36.

B. 2007 session of the Economic and Social Council

51. During its 2007 session, the Economic and Social Council paid explicit attention to gender equality in some of its segments and during high-level meetings. Gender perspectives were also reflected in some of the Secretary-General's reports before the Council and in Council outcomes, including the Ministerial Declaration.²⁹

52. The Ministerial Declaration of the Council's high-level segment, "Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development", reaffirmed that gender equality and the promotion and protection of the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all are essential to eradicate poverty and hunger. The ministers and heads of delegations reiterated that all countries should promote gender equality and empowerment of women and identify and accelerate actions towards that end, as called for, *inter alia*, in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

53. Under the coordination segment, the two reports of the Secretary-General before the Council on the role of the United Nations system in providing full and productive employment and decent work for all (E/2007/49) and the role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits (A/62/89-E/2007/76) paid attention to gender equality. The Council adopted resolution 2007/2, "The role of the United Nations system in providing full and productive employment and decent work for all", under its coordination segment. The Council requested the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, as appropriate within their respective mandates, to coordinate their employment and decent work-related activities and programmes in order to promote coherent and mutually supportive multidisciplinary and multisectoral approaches, including those mainstreaming a gender perspective.

54. Under its humanitarian affairs segment, the Council adopted resolution 2007/3, "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations", in which it requested the Secretary-General to provide an update on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee review of its 1999 policy statement on the integration of a gender perspective into humanitarian assistance and to report on steps taken in this regard. In resolution 2007/13, the Council noted the progress made by the Government of Haiti in terms of gender equality as well as the importance of gender equality as a necessary dimension of any strategy for development.

55. Under the operational activities segment, the Economic and Social Council reviewed a report on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations development system (A/62/73-E/2007/52), in preparation for review by the General Assembly. The report noted that, at country level, United Nations system-capacity development processes supported national efforts for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. Some progress on accountability through gender-responsive budgeting and gender auditing was noted.

²⁹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/62/3/Rev.1), E/2007/INF/2/Add.1, A/62/72-E/2007/73, A/62/73-E/2007/52, A/62/87-E/2007/70, A/62/89-E/2007/76 and E/2007/49.

However, there had been insufficient gender analysis to identify and address gender perspectives in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects and programmes. A major remaining challenge was to establish linkages between the United Nations system's gender equality interventions and concrete results in terms of changes in national policies, legislation, programmes, social attitudes and behaviours.

56. During the general segment, the Council considered the annual report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system (E/2007/64) under the agenda item "Advancement of women". The Council acknowledged that enhancing women's opportunities, potential and activities required a dual focus that included programmes aimed at both meeting specific needs of women and ensuring gender mainstreaming in programme formulation and implementation activities. It adopted resolution 2007/33, "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system", in which all United Nations entities were encouraged to continue investing in capacity development, including through mandatory training for all staff and personnel and training for senior managers, as a critical means of increasing the awareness, knowledge, commitment and competencies of staff with regard to mainstreaming a gender perspective in all United Nations policies and programmes.

57. In its decision 2007/238, the Council decided to transmit the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-first session to the commemorative high-level plenary meeting devoted to the follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children in the General Assembly.

58. The Council also adopted resolution 2007/32, "Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)", under the general segment. In the resolution the Council urged Governments, donors and the Joint Programme to significantly expand efforts to address inequality and inequity between men and women, gender-based violence, including sexual and physical abuse of women, girls and boys, harmful gender-based practices and social and cultural norms, stigma, discrimination, deficiencies in sexual and reproductive health and lack of respect for human rights, as major factors that heighten vulnerability to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

59. The special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, on 16 April 2008, focused on the theme "Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus". Measures leading to the empowerment of women and their full participation in economic activity were identified as important aspects of good governance.³⁰

Functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council

60. Most of the functional commissions took gender perspectives into account, to some extent, in their deliberations. However, apart from the Commission on the Status of Women, only three functional commissions of the Council, the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on Crime Prevention and

³⁰ See www.un.org/esa/ffd/ecosoc/springmeetings/2008/index.htm.

Criminal Justice and the Commission on Population and Development, paid attention to gender perspectives in their outcomes across a range of policy areas, including population ageing, crime prevention, social development and population.

61. The Commission for Social Development adopted a draft resolution, adopted by the Economic and Social Council as resolution 2007/28, entitled, "Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development", in which the Council welcomed efforts to mainstream a gender perspective and the empowerment of women in implementation of the New Partnership. The Commission also adopted resolution 45/1, "Modalities for the first review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing", in which it drew attention to the importance of mainstreaming gender perspectives in global agendas on ageing.

62. Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/27,³¹ entitled "Supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond", adopted on the basis of a draft resolution of the Commission for Social Development, highlighted women's equal access to information communication technologies, the vulnerability of young women to HIV/AIDS, and the equal rights of young women and men to participate at the local, national, regional and international levels in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The situation of young women and girls was also highlighted in the context of access to information communication technologies, HIV/AIDS and armed conflict. Governments were called on to promote greater participation of young women in the labour force, including those living in rural and remote areas.

63. The Commission on Population and Development adopted resolution 2007/1 entitled "Changing age structures of populations and their implications for development" in which it encouraged Governments to apply policies that support gender equality, protect the human rights of older persons, particularly older women, and assist abused older persons.

64. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice adopted a draft resolution entitled "Supporting national efforts for child justice reform, in particular through technical assistance and improved United Nations system-wide coordination", adopted by the Economic and Social Council as resolution 2007/23. Member States were urged to pay particular attention to the issue of child justice and to take into consideration applicable United Nations standards and norms for the treatment of children in conflict with the law, particularly those deprived of their liberty, taking into account, inter alia, the gender-specific needs of such children.

C. Fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Assessment of the impact of the input of the Commission on the Status of Women to discussions in the United Nations system

65. At its fifty-first session in 2007, the Commission focused on "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child" as its priority theme. In the adopted agreed conclusions,³² the Commission invited the entities of

³¹ See also resolution 62/126.

³² See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council 2007, Supplement No. 7* (E/2007/27-E/CN.6/2007/9), chap. I, sect. A.

the United Nations system, especially its funds and programmes, to increase their efforts, including through, as appropriate, the United Nations country teams, to strengthen their country-level advocacy and their technical capacities to address all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/9, a number of United Nations entities provided input to the preparation of the report.³³

66. In support of the Commission's work on the theme, a number of entities undertook outreach activities, carried out research which highlighted the situation of marginalized adolescent girls and those living in vulnerable situations, and identified gaps in policies and strategies aimed at protecting the girl child from commercial sexual exploitation.

67. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) played an active role in preparation for and during the fifty-first session of the Commission. Since the adoption of the agreed conclusions, UNICEF has prepared a learning package on the complementarity of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)). UNICEF also renewed efforts to reach the most marginalized girls; facilitated the sharing of girls' views during the preparation of poverty reduction strategy papers and efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and contributed to the body of data used to inform and monitor national policies and actions, giving specific attention to girls aged 10-14 and 15-19.

68. Initiatives were taken by entities to address discrimination and violence against girls. The World Food Programme collaborated with partners to provide necessary non-food items, minimizing the risk of violence against girls in schools. The increased visibility of the problem of violence against girls encouraged the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to examine ways to address the issue more effectively.

69. The work of the Commission on the Status of Women created momentum for the recently launched inter-agency statement on the elimination of female genital mutilation, coordinated by the World Health Organization (WHO) and co-sponsored by 10 United Nations agencies,³⁴ to strengthen commitments of United Nations entities at the highest level. UNFPA organized a meeting of United Nations organizations, Governments and civil society to discuss the development of a road map which aims to eliminate female genital mutilation/cutting within one generation. It also published *A Holistic Approach to the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*. UNFPA and UNICEF recently launched a joint programme and

³³ The Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the World Food Programme, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

³⁴ The Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Health Organization.

trust fund that aims to reduce female genital mutilation/cutting by 40 per cent in 17 countries by the year 2012.

70. Entities, including the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, reported on awareness-raising activities undertaken to address discrimination and violence against the girl child. The Department worked actively to inform global audiences on the need to end discrimination and violence against the girl child. The Division for the Advancement of Women produced a brochure of the agreed conclusions on "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child" to facilitate their dissemination and use by a wide range of stakeholders, including in the United Nations system. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East held workshops to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and discussion groups, including for girls, on the issue of domestic violence.

71. Entities gathered information on the specific situation of girls and policy implications. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in partnership with UNICEF and ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) undertook a project on the commercial sexual exploitation of children that highlighted the situation of girls and policies to address their needs. The Commission carried out a gender analysis to highlight the vulnerability of girls to commercial sexual exploitation in the Pacific subregion. WHO supported research to define evidence-based interventions for improving women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health.

72. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) reported working with partners to clarify linkages and define effective programmes on violence and HIV for emergency-affected populations, and advocates to channel resources towards programmes that address girls as well as women, violence, and HIV in emergency and humanitarian situations.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

73. The full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly requires systematic integration of gender perspectives in social, political and economic development at all levels. Intergovernmental bodies have a critical role to play in providing policy guidance on the gender dimensions in all policy areas to facilitate gender-sensitive policy development and effective implementation at the national level. Increased and systematic attention to the gender dimensions of issues under consideration by the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, and the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, is critical to moving the global policy agenda on gender equality forward.

74. Progress in gender mainstreaming in the intergovernmental process can be measured by the extent to which gender perspectives are integrated into documentation provided to facilitate consideration of issues by intergovernmental bodies; in thematic discussions and interactive events to stimulate an exchange of ideas, lessons learned and good practices during consideration of agenda items; and in outcomes such as resolutions and decisions.

75. During its sixty-second session, the General Assembly advanced global policy on gender equality in a number of critical areas. Attention to gender perspectives was, however, not systematically included in all documentation before or outcomes of the Assembly.

76. The Assembly paid some attention to gender perspectives in the preparation of and follow-up to major international conferences and summits, and high-level dialogues and events. A noticeable gap was identified in the area of climate change. Efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in preparation for and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits should be strengthened. Attention to gender perspectives should, for example, be included in documentation, interactive activities and outcomes of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in 2008 and the Durban Review Conference in 2009, as well as in other high-level dialogues and events of the Assembly.

77. The Economic and Social Council and several of its functional commissions continued to make efforts to incorporate gender perspectives into their discussions and outcomes. Greater efforts are needed, however, to facilitate more systematic attention to gender perspectives in the work of all the functional commissions, including through increased consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women, which continues to play a catalytic role in advancing gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system and at the national level.

78. To enhance the role of the Commission on the Status of Women in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy, its outcomes should be systematically transmitted through the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly, the functional commissions of the Council and other relevant intergovernmental bodies. The outcomes should also be systematically disseminated to entities of the United Nations, including specialized agencies, funds and programmes, to ensure effective support to Member States at the national level.

79. Regular reporting on intergovernmental outcomes on gender equality and their impact on the work of intergovernmental bodies and United Nations entities can help advance the global policy agenda on gender equality and women's empowerment and ensure follow-up and implementation at the national level.